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An
Inaugural Essay
On
Melancholia & Hypochondriasis
For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine
In the University of Pennsylvania
By
Thomas. S. Charlton
of Georgia
Philadelphia. Dec. 1827

—
Aquam succento sclus in arduis serare mentem
Hor.

1847

Received of the
Honble the Secy of the
Treasury
the sum of \$1000
for the purchase of
land in the
State of New York
for the use of the
Army
this 1st day of
January 1847

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Aquam memento solum in arduis servare mentem.

—Sorrow, and the numerous ills of life do not exist without their antidotes; these are, an elasticity of mind, and a tendency to hope, which mitigate the acuteness of affliction, and buoy in despondency the sufferer, from what would otherwise be its frequent termination, despair. — This self reviving faculty is not possessed equally by all, and to its absence or presence in a slight degree, are frequently to be attributed, the diversified phenomena of mental alienation, from the retired gloom of the misanthrope, to the hallucinations of the enthusiast, or the incoherent ravings of the maniac. —

— Among the diseases attendant on this loss of moral equilibrium *Melancholia* assumes a prominent

-stasis, I have united to this Hypochondriasis. — The distinctions commonly made between these designate the first as a disease of mental origin, having for its location the sensorium, and the latter as one caused by gastric, or enteric disorders. I think however that they will be found to approximate, both as regards their causes, and indications of treatment, and that commencing as they may a ~~mutual~~ conversion of symptoms takes place in their more advanced stages. Melancholia seldom existing long without corporeal derangement, and, *vice versa*, —

— The symptoms that characterize Dyspepsia are generally the first that present themselves in Hypochondriasis; costiveness, acid, and other eructations either in the disease, accompanied by oppression and sometimes pain in the epigastrium after food, a want of ap-

- petite or a depraved one, a feeling of general lassitude and muscular debility &c. - Not being combated by their most successful antagonists, change of climate, simplicity of diet, exercise, and regularity of habits, the intellect becomes morbid in its functions, the attention is directed to a multiplicity of diseases with which the patient supposes himself to be haunted, or in his "mind's eye" he is metamorphosed into some fantastic form of his own or other species of animal: One fancies himself expanded into Cyclopean dimensions, another, clothes himself with Homer's pygmy and deprecates his being crushed by the human giants he meets. It is to be remarked, that the mind is perverted but on one point, addresses the Hypochondriac on subjects of common conversation or even on

those of an abstruse nature, and you will
 often find his reasoning acute & pertinent,
 there is but one rock on which it is wreck-
 ed.—The variety of whim occurring here
 has from time immemorial afforded abun-
 dant food for satirists, but he who en-
 deavours to eradicate by argument, or ero-
 ding the perversions of judgment thus aris-
 ing, may well be said to "eat at scars".—
 —Though in this affection the mind is di-
 rected to supposed disease, and in the
 most distinct cases is peculiarly ap-
 propriated to this subject, unconnected
 with the total direction commonly pre-
 sent in Melancholia, still there are
 other forms of it in which a striking
 similarity exists between them, and
 where as before remarked, they have
 reciprocal symptoms.—No not cases oc-
 cur, which, though they may be of gas-
 tric origin afford but little symptoma-

- the evidence of such causes, to let
the patient not only fancy him-
self ill, but also to be conscious do but dis-
turbance as regards the termination of
the occurrence of life in which he
may be engaged. If a distinction
is to be made between this and a
choice it must be but slight. —

— Cause. An excitement of the system
must first be taken either from without or
as the exciting cause of Myocarditis,
and this opinion I think as far as
it respects of exciting, correct. Irrita-
tion is a prelude to all functional de-
rangement and as a concomitant, as in
this place a report, we may place cap-
illary congestion and most action, believ-
ing it to be a law of the human economy
that a tonic state of the nerves is con-
sistently ^{more} ~~not~~ in itself, this is
exemplified in English nervous cases.



where a violent and excited nervous
action is caused by continued tension
and an opposite or disturbed state
of the arteries by the small and internis-
ting pulses, the quivering state of the pulse
is betwixt confirms this and the inter-
disposition are too numerous for an ex-
position. The causes of these various states
are among the same of physics but from
their effect on the functional system
must be drawn. The same magnetic
treatment on the, the process of stimulation is
the same, the repetition of shocks, the
use of food with difficulty directed &c pro-
duce a state of nervous irritation in that
situation this is the first step of the inflam-
mation of inflammation and it is probable
(that the second also takes place, viz. a
capillary congestion, that this may be the
cause that an effusion is made
to overcome it, is caused in the first id



force of most persons will find an
exaggerated view, there being excessive
the system to propel the stomach fluids
in the extreme vessel engaged in a light
repose for the cause mentioned, but as
these causes of irritation act with much
greater energy in the stomach of the
dilated or detached, the consequent
reaction will be proportionate and there
will not only exist a greater and excited
state of system in general, but the vessels
of the whole system excited in the same
manner and the gastric juice will be imper-
fectly produced or be diluted, the contra-
ction of the colon leading to the intestines pro-
duces thin end water, and has a
The disease thus radiating from its pri-
mary location the Nephros, extends itself
and involves at one period or other nearly
every function and system. The inter-
connection existing between the digestive



and sensorial functions with headaches
 and for the intelligent symptoms of
 mental alienation, now this is a course
 of mind and collecting sympathy
 takes place we know not but that it
 even so is no longer a subject for con-
 sideration. On the whole, there is much
 reason to believe that most mental
 disorders except those arising from various
 local lesions upon the brain such as
 tumours, &c. are based on gas-
 tric disorder or at least that the latter
 greatly predisposes to them.

Functional disease of the liver often
 accompanies the other circumstances, and
 is cured itself by the usual regimen;
 it has happened that forms of Hypochon-
 driasis have been found to arise from
 a collection of vitiated bile on the liver
 and in these cases a brisk purgative
 will afford temporary relief but as the



melancholy is a disease which is not
in itself a palliation.—

Melancholy is in those minds
not so it is brought into action by
some thing, to have a permanent &
surprising effect on the cheerfulness
and affections. Sudden surges of fer-
vour and intellect for planning dis-
tinct productions often in him who is the
poor, a man who is a pauper in spirit,
a state of furious mania, it is not
the only example of a great mind and
a condition of intense power and wis-
dom occurs. Another, and perhaps, more
is the agent here of those united by
the ties of love & friendship, or com-
munity, the more it is left in the affec-
tion by the loss of these, the deep regret
with which the memory seems to
be wrought and laboured, and the sense
of the element united with



that recall him but all is in a phre-
and feeling, mind to intellect. But
then muted by retirement and retrospec-
tion. A possession of the mild and en-
ing attributes of religion has often led the
most earnest asking, how often and how sad-
ly, the self-mutilated doctors of Asiatic
superstition and the votaries of false
hopes even who will acknowledge
more civilized and times
and mistaken that still misleads
the thoughtless, and has
with imaginary hopes the
in trouble. Of all forms of delu-
sion this is the most hope-
desponding, how can it be otherwise
in the imagination of the sufferer the
care and sorrows of this life pass
away to be succeeded by an eternal
endless, and prescribed that
ment and misery, to hit on the most



ings of exasperated demons is omnipresent
and all the poetical paraphernalia of
the learned be his eye. Heavens, depre-
cated in a condition, feeling, and in-
gave all the emotions and passions that
their victims of this class, for in propor-
tion to the strong power they exercise over
the judgment is the susceptibility of their
passions to their mortal influences. —

The emotions are modified by the va-
rious temperament. The patient ex-
hibiting them has sometimes a morose
discontent and disgust to all around
him, to those who were in a same state the
wells of affection. He who is to use
the language of metaphor, to express, of
this demon, can never experience the su-
periority of relief by which pleasure on exis-
tence, for that life is but to him a state
of war. With the honors of his disease
intelligible which exerts a powerful influ-



ence and is most perceptible in the ex-
pression of countenance, though fortune
may have lacerated her face, though
by those who knew not the secrets of
his "prison house" he would be called hap-
py, still his mind pregnant with ill con-
sent, blighting with curses, benefits and evils,
be whether the supposed sufferer, or
a witness to his sufferings or he considers
himself as the object of general piteous-
ness, the tears which are crowded
the most cruel of men and nature,
they may be said to be the most perfect evi-
dence of social union - a union of those most
abandoned to despair. It is the same
as Nature has a which I think repre-
sented in the "Hyacinth" is, being
in its course moving and vibrating
of great origin, these emotions are to
relieve suffering. The poet can be said to
be a habit of this art.



Not always however is the melancholic identified with the apathetic feeling of the melancholic, different is the case when he endowed with that rich suzerainty of feelings and character, distinguished a warm heart existing, in this tempest of emotions, a vivid imagination, and great moral sensibility, falls under the ban of this disease, he looks forward to the felicity which his creative mind had promised him and is only aroused from visions by the realities of poverty & despair. — the greater the tendency to melancholy, and fertile the imagination, the constant & profound will be in proportion, and he is visited with illusions of that happiness he cannot enjoy, the sufferer endeavours to find in total abstraction from what is real, a comforted as the dweller of the desert in the deep solitude of the convent or on



the lovely shore of the sea to view in
the shade of alders & willows the mean-
ing of blighted affections and as one would
say, to him, —

"Life is a transient hour that
brings the dull day for a weary man"

— In tracing the history
of the sufferings of melan cholia it
may be remarked that for many affec-
tions of that nature may be enumerated
among the curses of our race; for, who
is there whose mind has not experien-
ced that universal degeneration arising
from no certain cause, but exercising a
suspicion many over his indigement and
inclination to long it soon its paroxysms?
These moments are more or less frequent
with all men and though not fatal if
not as diseases from their influence and
recurrence are formidable to human fe-
licity. —



Treatment. The remedies consist of
such a combination of symptoms that
it is impossible to treat them on general
principles we must combat each by its
individual indication and remove them
successively. As directed to the action
of the digestive functions the method
of cure will not vary much from that
proper in Dyspepsia. To answer the
purpose of evacuants when indicated by
the tenacity of the tongue, & emetics are
the most proper remedies, they act as by an
over this purpose but tend to attract the
mind from its habitual location to itself.
It is generally accepted that the salutary
effect of emetics are not limited to the
time of their operation, and in a variety
of they act with, rather more to be
felt than in the present the who has suf-
fered for days in a state of great
consequent prostration and oppression, &c.



... after a long though imperfect attempt
at relief by cathartics, but succeeded by
a moderate use of Opium. But, as it will
be known how to appreciate their effects.

They appear to act by causing a resolu-
tion upon the congested capillaries to
some other part, and by equalizing the
circulation; they must be the precursors
of more immediate sedatives which can
not be resorted to prior to their use.

There are no symptoms occurring in
the course of this disease that demand
a more unbecoming attention than those
indicating the state of the bowels. If
during a great scarcity of feces, there
be a period in which astringents, and an-
other a constant and watery diarrhoea;
this latter most commonly arises from
irritation and astringents would be use-
less or prejudicial. The degree of irritation
must be called in requisition and of





Since a continuation of icterus or hypericemia
 with stercoræ is the most proper, I do not
 speak of purg, because I think that wherever
 we can have an efficient substitute for it, it is
 ought not to be recommended, especially in cases
 of the present nature when from the temporary
 it drops as to the mental depression, the patient
 will probably use it habitually, this is not so
 much the case with the other narcotics. The
 Sassafras, a remedy acceptable in any part
 of this country - has been employed with much
 advantage in the dyspeptic sequelæ of fever and
 would be led to its employment in the present dis-
 ease from analogy. - In the opposite or constipa-
 ted state of the bowels which exists much more
 commonly than the one just mentioned the use of
 cathartics must be entered on with much precau-
 tion, the most habit of thus exciting the per-
 staltic motion is as absolutely necessary, and is
 greatly to be avoided. The best method of keeping
 the bowels properly actable is the use of food of less

active tendency, and the establishment of at least an attempt at daily evacuation, where a cathartic is absolutely necessary. Rhubarb will probably answer best. — For the purpose of more immediately restoring the tone of the alimentary canal we have been liberally supplied with remedies in the mineral and vegetable tonics, among the former of these the chalybeates deserve most attention, and are of most advantage when taken at the different springs impregnated with them; this local benefit has been attributed the renal calculus and general bustle prevailing at these places and which no doubt are valuable auxiliaries in the restoration of the chief vessels. — The vegetable tonics have all been used and with varied success, the Bark, Juniper, quassia, either alone or combined with the carbonate of potash are among the most common they have an indigenous medicine of this kind, the *Eupatorium Filadelficum* which is peculiarly appropriate act. most commonly as a local tonic on the stomach without exciting the general circulation; in parts of Georgia when the facilities of obtaining other tonics are few this remedy is

deservedly in much estimation. — These are the remedies with which we treat the physical symptoms of Melancholia and Hypochondriasis and as based on the opinion of their nature, predisposition in the first, and origin in the second, — And to the removal of these symptoms our attempts are limited, for, the task of "ministering to a mind diseased" is beyond the reach of medical skill or mortal knowledge. Should the morbid link be broken by the restoration of the digestive functions, we may have much reason to hope that the natural activity of the mind, the absence or obliteration by time of the incidents, and cheerful associations, may subvert, or eventually overcome the tendency to permanent depression. And, that in the consolations of religion and moral action, pursuing the even tenor of life, unshaken by prosperity and not despairing in other fortunes, the patient will find that happiness, not to be attained by the Leaky or Hisseny. —